

The Center for Irish Partnerships at UMass Lowell

A Shared Heritage ... A Shared Future

Greetings from the co-directors:

Given the major role the Irish have played in the history of Lowell—and at UMass Lowell—it was natural that we would seek to strengthen ties with Ireland through new education and research partnerships.

We are happy to let you know about the many—and growing—successes of the Center for Irish Partnerships at UMass Lowell, established in 2009 as one of several new international centers meant to bring the world to our students and our students to the world.

Among the many programs you will read about in this publication are a conference series on emerging technologies in the United States and Ireland; a conference on the Irish in Massachusetts; archeological digs in Lowell and Northern Ireland; faculty exchanges; and student study abroad opportunities.

The success of the center is founded on the strength of our relationships with our Irish partners, the support of our advisory board, the encouragement of the campus and city communities and the generous support of our donors. Thank you.

Frank Talty

Stephen McCarthy

Victoria Denoon

The Center for Irish Partnerships

Enriching a Bond Two Centuries in the Making

It's an invisible cord, but a strong and enduring one.

It is a cord that has connected Lowell and Ireland since 1822, when Hugh Cumiskey, an immigrant from County Tyrone, led Irish laborers living in Boston on a 30-mile march to Lowell to help dig the canals for the city's booming textile mills. Lowell was a brand new community, cut out of farmland along the banks of the Merrimack River and destined to become a wellspring of the American industrial revolution.

And the Irish played a key role in that revolution—they made up one-third of the population of the city by 1850—as well as in the evolution of this vibrant, ever-changing city over the next two centuries.

Six years ago, UMass Lowell established the Center for Irish Partnerships, drawing on the long, rich bond between Lowell and Ireland and Northern Ireland to create collaborations with Irish partners on new research and educational projects of mutual concern.

The center and its projects—with the university's many other international ventures—provides unique opportunities and a global perspective for our students, while contributing to Irish interests through exchange and service.

Our Partners

The Strength of the Enterprise is in the Relationships

The Center for Irish Partnerships is proud to have established a rich array of collaborations with the following educational institutions in Ireland and Northern Ireland. These partnerships have already yielded student and faculty exchanges, joint research and a deepened understanding of the historical, social and economic connections between the United States and Ireland.

- Queen's University Belfast
- Dublin City University
- Ulster University
- National University of Ireland, Galway
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- University of Limerick
- University College Cork

Working Together

Projects and Programs that Yield New Knowledge and Understanding

The U.S./Ireland Emerging Technologies Conference Series

UMass Lowell, Dublin City University and Queen's University Belfast, established this series, which highlights the innovative research being conducted in nanotechnology, biomanufacturing, bioprocessing, polymer science, medical device development and diagnostics. Researchers from the U.S. and Ireland come together to present cutting-edge research that is shaping the future of how we use nanotechnology and biological sciences in manufacturing and medical diagnostics. To date, three events in Lowell and Ireland have addressed the issues of discovery, enterprise and learning approaches in advancing these emerging technologies.

The Irish in Massachusetts: Historical Significance, Lasting Legacy Conference

In September 2014, UMass Lowell and Queen's University Belfast presented a conference at UMass Lowell that offered an interdisciplinary look at the understudied nature of the Irish Diaspora in New England, with specific focus on the Irish and their contributions to Massachusetts. Topics included:

- Ireland and the Atlantic World 1550 to 1650
- Long Threatening Comes at Last: Ireland's Great Famine in Irish-American
- The Union, Slavery and Irish Americans in the Civil War
- The Irish in Lowell
- Irish-American Politics in Massachusetts
- The Irish in Sport

Irish-American Heritage Archaeological Program

In 1831, Kirk Boott, a mill manager, donated a plot of company land to build St. Patrick's Catholic Church to help support the growing population of Irish in Lowell.

In August 2010, archaeologists undertook a first-ever historical archaeological dig on the grounds of St. Patrick's Church, site of the first Irish habitation in the 1820s. The excavation was led by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork at Queen University Belfast in collaboration with six UMass Lowell students. The team discovered over 1,300 artifacts from the period, including rosary beads, clay pipes, oyster shells, animal bones, nails, pottery shards, bottles, and metal work—providing clues to the history of the first wave of Irish immigrants who settled in Lowell.

Additional weeks of excavation took place at St. Patrick's and in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, at the site of the Hugh Cumiskey homestead.

The Irish-American Heritage Archaeological Program enables students to gain a deeper understanding of the life of the Irish before and after *An Gorta Mór* (“The Great Hunger”) and the role played by the Irish in the development of America during the 19th century.

Faculty Connections

Promoting New Alliances, New Discoveries

The Center for Irish Partnerships provides mini-grants to faculty who are engaged in research with colleagues at one of our partner institutions in Ireland or Northern Ireland.

Several faculty members have given lectures, spent sabbaticals and conducted Fulbright research at various institutions including, National University of Ireland at Galway, Queens University Belfast, Dublin City University and St. Patrick's Drumcondra.

UMass Lowell has hosted faculty from Queen's University, Dublin City University and Cork Institute of Technology on campus for lectures and workshops.

Faculty/Partner Testimonials

Note to Sarah: This one can go near section on the archeological dig:

"This vibrant center does not restrict itself to historical reflection; it also reaches out to modern academics and communities in both jurisdictions in Ireland, helping to reinforce and continue a centuries-old relationship that spans the Atlantic."

Dr. Colm Donnelly, Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast

Note to Sarah: these quotes can be distributed throughout publication where appropriate. Victoria can advise.

"Collaboration gives us the best chance of going far in solving the world's big challenges.

Collaboration between University College Cork and UMass Lowell can bring us far."

John O'Halloran, vice president for Teaching and Learning, University College Cork

"No Massachusetts institution has done more to further U.S.-Ireland relationships and to build the peace in the north of Ireland than the Center for Irish Partnerships at the UMass Lowell. The Center is a trailblazer of transatlantic alliances and a pioneer of Irish-American discovery."

-Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, member of Legislative Assembly, Northern Ireland

“The Center for Irish Partnerships has been an important resource and a valued partner in our efforts to promote economic and cultural cooperation and collaborations between Ireland and the United States.”

Michael Heaney, director of Enterprise and Investment, Udaras na Gaeltachta (The Gaeltacht Development Authority)

“My collaboration with Dublin City University, made possible with help from the Center for Irish Partnerships, enabled me to broaden my research into the psychosocial well-being of older adults. I have taken what I learned during my sabbatical in Ireland back to Lowell to benefit our nursing students.

Karen Devereaux Melillo, interim dean, School of Nursing

Student Experiences

Bringing New Generations into the Conversation

Nearly 40 of our students have already spent a semester or year studying at one of our partner institutions or participated in specialized summer schools and research projects. They have taken classes, participated in conferences and attended lectures by world-class researchers from Ireland. Some are pursuing graduate studies in Ireland, made possible by the doors opened to them through the Center's programs and collaborations.

Note to Sarah: this photo/caption should be in the “student experiences” section.



Caption:

Members of the UMass Lowell River Hawks Hockey Team visited children at Oakwood Integrated Primary School in Belfast during their trip to Northern Ireland to participate in the Friendship Four collegiate hockey tournament in November 2015. The student athletes from Lowell visited local schools, participated in cultural activities and learned about the role that ice hockey has played in bringing communities together in a post-conflict Northern Ireland.

Student Testimonials

Note to Sarah: these quotes can be distributed where appropriate. First one near dig section.

“As a participant in the Irish-American Heritage Archaeological Program, I saw how the dig connected Lowell and Northern Ireland and how amazing the discovery of history is. It was an experience full of wonderful people, learning and traveling that I would not trade for anything.”

Marcelle Durrenberger, mechanical engineering, '16

“I signed up for the International Summer School at Queen's because I'm of Irish descent and I wanted a clearer understanding of the history of the troubles. The Irish made me feel at home and they went out of their way to please everyone in the group.”

Mark Bresnihan, criminal justice '11, peace and conflict studies '13

“The classes at Queen's University were fantastic and touched on issues that I want to study throughout my career, such as the role of race and ethnicity, asylum and migration and postcolonial history. Because of my experiences studying abroad, I have been encouraged to apply to graduate schools in international or global development throughout Europe.”

Nicholas Gates, history and political science '16

Public Engagement

Providing a Platform for Sharing Information and Perspectives

At the Center for Irish Partnerships, we understand that one way to spark new ideas, insights and solutions is to bring community members together to share stories, questions and perspectives. To that end, we provide a wide range of activities such as guest speaker series, seminars, joint conferences and cultural events that are open to the public and help ensure that our work has a lasting and positive impact on our community.

Some recent events include:

Note to sarah: Victoria can help ID photos to go with any of these.

- Lecture at UMass Lowell by Dublin City University Prof. Gary Murphy on “Ireland: From Celtic Tiger to IMF Bailout”
- Public forum co-sponsored by the Center for Irish Partnerships and the Middle East Center on Peace and Education entitled “Facing Conflict, Voices from the Field”
- Lecture at UMass Lowell by Queen’s University Belfast Prof. Peter Shirlow on “Belfast: A post-conflict conundrum?”
- Former President of Ireland, Dr. Mary McAleese, was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree at a reception at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center in November 2013.

Public Affairs

Connecting Government, Business and Educational Leaders

As the reputation of the Center for Irish Partnerships grows, our participation in meetings and conversations of interest to Ireland and the United States has expanded beyond educational institutions to include government and business organizations. We have met with the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, the Taoiseach Enda Kenny, two Irish Ambassadors to the United States Michael Collins and Anne Anderson, various government ministers from Ireland and Northern Ireland and maintain a close working relationship with the Consulate General of Ireland in Boston.

Ireland's former Minister for Children and Youth Affairs visited UMass Lowell for a roundtable discussion on Children's Rights with faculty members and we participated in a trade delegation to Ireland led by Massachusetts Senate President Therese Murray.

The Center also hosts an annual visit by a delegation of government and university leaders from Northwest Ireland to discuss partnerships and collaborations between UMass Lowell and the Northwest of Ireland in relation to higher education.

The Center for Irish Partnerships Advisory Board

- Joe Brice '81
- Thomas Costello, computer science professor
- Martha Howe, attorney
- Art McCabe, McCabe and Associates
- David McKean '75
- Joe McNamee, Eastern Salt Co., Inc.
- Owen Meehan '01
- Edward Moloney, attorney
- Jim O'Brien, New England Chapter, Irish Chamber of Commerce, ret.
- Amy Regan '89, '90
- Molly Sheehy '60, '82, '00

Gifts and Bequests

Tax-deductible donations support programs that provide educational and research opportunities for students and faculty members and help us host public programs and events that advance understanding of the role of Ireland and Irish-Americans in Lowell and the United States. For more information, contact ...

The Center for Irish Partnerships at UMass Lowell would like to thank the following individuals for their support:

Ellen M. Anstey '08
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UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center
UMass Lowell Office of Provost
UMass Lowell Office of Community Relations
Audrey A. Veiga
Emily Zeitsev

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